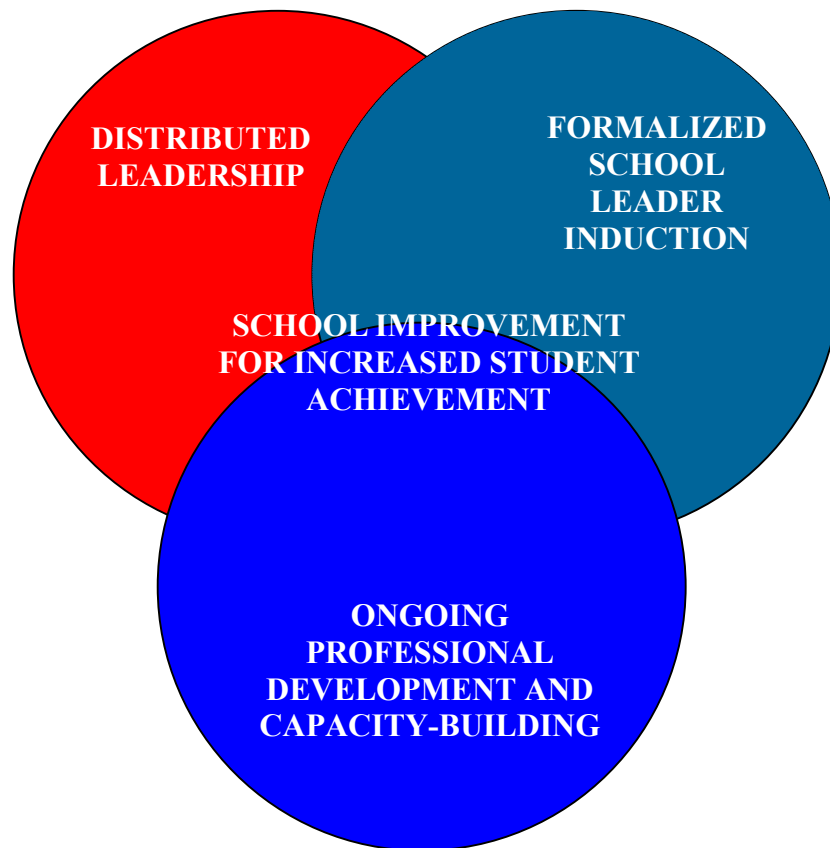


# PROJECT SUMMARY

## *STATE ACTION FOR EDUCATION LEADERSHIP PROJECT II (SAELP II)*

### Connecticut

**“Recruiting, Inducting, and Growing” Leadership in Connecticut Schools**



August 24, 2004

## **Executive Summary of Proposed Project:**

Connecticut's SAELP II proposal builds upon key accomplishments of SAELP I including, clarification of school leader roles and responsibilities, development of state-wide school leader evaluation and professional development guidelines, developing and implementation of measure of shared leadership at the school level (Distributed Leadership Readiness Scale), development of alternate routes for administrator preparation and piloting of urban leadership academies.

SAELP II will institutionalize the policies to enhance working conditions, skills and capacities of school leaders throughout their career continuum, including providing more purposeful preparation and induction for educational leaders and continuous improvement and leadership capacity building that steadfastly focuses on raising student achievement of students with the greatest needs. The SAELP II initiatives will be guided by a steering committee, which includes high ranking officials of the Governor's office, legislative leaders, the Commissioners of Education and the Department of Higher Education, business community representatives, and leaders of professional school leadership organizations. The SAELP II Leadership Advisory Panel- composed of approximately 60 representatives of Connecticut's public schools, universities and professional organizations will meet biannually and will serve as members of various policy task forces. Policy Laboratory Grants (described below) will engage various constituencies, including Hartford LEAD and networks of urban and non-urban school districts throughout the state along with critical service providers (e.g., universities, professional organizations) to formulate policies and practices that will lead to sustainability of leadership initiatives into the future. Each Break-through Idea has as its common focus the development of policies and practices that build school improvement capacity to raise student achievement.

### **Break-through Idea One: Distributed Leadership**

The quality and sustainability of leadership must be addressed at multiple levels including school leadership standards for preparation programs, district policies, instructional leadership at the school level and collaboration for performance-based instruction at the classroom. To address conditions for success, identification and preparation of our future school leaders, Connecticut has proposed state level strategies (e.g., revising certification requirements, preparation program approval requirements, broaden opportunities and incentives for school leadership), district level strategies (e.g., using competitive SAELP grants as an opportunity to formulate policies and practices for succession planning, aspirant programs and distributed leadership). Each through-line has as its focus, providing opportunities to build school improvement capacity to raise student achievement.

### **SAELP Break-through Idea Two: Formalized Induction for School Improvement**

Universities, Districts and critical Providers will use Induction Guidelines to reshape policies, resources and support processes focused on targeted school improvement for new administrators.

Connecticut has built an outstanding induction program for teachers yet there has been little progress to develop a state-wide policy for administrator induction. Connecticut, through large scale engagement of universities, practitioners and key decision makers will create state administrator induction guidelines and will propose legislation to fund induction on a continuing basis. Further, Districts will participate as Policy Laboratories, to revise policies, and redirect budgets to implement induction for new administrators. Connecticut will collect and disseminate models and best practices to assist districts to implement induction.

### **SAELP Breakthrough Idea Three: Continuous Professional Development and Capacity Building for School Improvement SDE will examine Certification, Preparation Approval and CEU requirements and Policy Labs will be used to work with LEAD/Urban and non urban districts will network to re-shape professional development policies and access to resources targeted to strengthening school improvement capacity**

Connecticut plans to propose revisions to its existing licensure process for veteran administrators. For too long existing professional development has been sporadic, disconnected and lacked focus with regard to its role in building the skills necessary to engage in effective school improvement. Districts will again serve as policy laboratories (demonstration sites), for the examination and revision of policies to promote a culture of leadership for learning. In addition districts will assess the conditions within schools that impede or promote continuous school improvement practices as well as roles and responsibilities of its leaders to raise student achievement. Results of successful policy and practices will become models of best practices that will be shared with all districts.

Connecticut's communication plan is designed to engage key policy and decision-makers at the state and local levels regarding the SAELP II leadership initiatives; disseminate results and best practices for each Break-through Idea to all districts, schools, and higher education institutions; and engage the public including families, local school communities, the business community, local boards of education to the goals and strategies of the SAELP II leadership initiatives and their relationship to improving the achievement of all students.

## ***PROPOSAL NARRATIVE***

### **Context of Connecticut's Education Reform and Leadership Initiatives**

Historically, educational policy reform has been successfully implemented in Connecticut through a combination of financial incentives (e.g., the salary enhancement provisions of the Education Enhancement Act of 1986), building the capacity of districts to implement reform (e.g., high quality professional development, technical assistance, and dissemination of best practices), the public reporting of results and resources (e.g., Strategic School Profiles), and the judicious and selective implementation of laws and regulations. The Connecticut State Department of Education (CSDE) has a long-standing history of leadership in public education and the successful building of consensus for policy change. This is largely the result of engaging diverse groups of stakeholders—including teachers, administrators, higher education faculty, professional associations, parents, unions, the business community, local and state boards of education, legislative leaders and the governor's office—through all stages of the policy-making process. The following section will provide a brief history of Connecticut's education reform initiatives over the last two decades.

Since mid-1980s, Connecticut's education reform agenda has been founded on three pillars: (1) high expectations and standards for student achievement, (2) high expectations and standards for teaching, and (3) closing gaps in student performance among racial and economic groups and reducing isolation. Connecticut's education agenda for the 21<sup>st</sup> century adds a fourth pillar of reform to ensure equity and excellence in Connecticut's education system: ensuring that all schools are led by caring and competent leaders and promoting new leadership roles for teachers.

The Education Enhancement Act of 1986 and its companion legislation addressed primarily the recruitment, preparation and support of teachers and introduced greater accountability for teaching and student learning by increasing salaries and licensure standards for Connecticut educators and assessing student achievement through the Connecticut Mastery Test (CMT) and Connecticut Academic Performance Test (CAPT) for 10<sup>th</sup> grade students.

The consequence of Connecticut's long-term commitment to this model of educational reform has been improved student performance across all the demographic strata of Connecticut. In the past decade, Connecticut students have consistently ranked near the top in the National Assessment of Educational Progress (NAEP) assessments in writing, reading, and mathematics. The International Reading Association awarded its Five-Star Recognition Award for the year 2001-2002 to the Connecticut State Board of Education and Connecticut State Department of Education. Much of this success can be attributed to policies which include establishing clear and high standards for students and teachers; measuring and reporting progress in achievement goals; equalization of school resources; reducing racial, ethnic and economic isolation of students; and building collaborative relationships with partners both within and outside the educational system.

Nonetheless, there remain large gaps in achievement, resources and opportunities between students in urban and non-urban districts. The Connecticut State Board of Education believes that "closing the achievement gaps is the greatest challenge of this decade, the first great educational challenge of the new century."<sup>1</sup>

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<sup>1</sup> Connecticut State Board of Education, *Greater Expectations: Connecticut's Comprehensive Plan for Education 2001-2005* (January, 2003)

## **The Role of SAELP I in Furthering Connecticut's Leadership Initiatives**

While the Education Enhancement Act placed teaching and learning at center stage of the educational reform agenda, attention began to shift to school leadership initiatives as early as 1989. The State Board of Education established an Administrator Certification Task Force charged with examining administrator preparation, certification, induction and professional development, and making recommendations to improve future school leadership. Over the next decade, efforts focused on defining the key aspects of effective leadership in the context of Connecticut's current policies, practices and aspirations for future schools. In 1999, the State Board of Education approved the *Connecticut School Leader Standards*, which defined the knowledge, skills and dispositions applicable to the intermediate level administrator (e.g., principals, assistant principals, curriculum coordinators, and assistant superintendents). Beginning in 2001, the *Connecticut Administrator Test* (CAT)—a performance-based assessment of prospective administrators knowledge of instructional analysis and the school improvement process-- was implemented as a requirement for candidates seeking to be recommended by preparing institutions for certification as intermediate administrators.

The Connecticut SAELP I School Advisory Panel grew out of two key groups convened earlier to address educational leadership needs in Connecticut. In the summer 2000, the Future School Leadership Committee, consisting of 55 educators, was asked by the Connecticut Commissioner of Education "to develop a concise analysis and long-range direction for developing, sustaining and improving the future leaders of Connecticut's schools." The committee prepared ten recommendations addressed to the State Board of Education, local school boards, the General Assembly and the Governor, and other state and local officials. The report identified two broad categories of concern: 1) Job Design and Compensation and 2) Recruitment, Training and Retention.

In January 2001, The General Assembly assembled the Commission on Teacher and Administrator Shortage and Minority Recruitment. The Commission reviewed research from national experts, CSDE educator supply and demand data, and the recommendations of the Future School Leadership Committee and other sources of information, and developed a report with a series of recommended legislative proposals.

The Connecticut SAELP Project was officially launched on April 2, 2001, when the School Leadership Advisory Panel was convened for the first time. The Panel consists of over 60 members, including representatives of the Steering Committee (Governor's Office, Legislature, State Board of Education, State Department of Education, and Business and Industry) professional organizations/unions, superintendents, principals, teachers, higher education, and each of the leadership preparation programs.

In December 2001, Connecticut was one of fifteen states awarded a Wallace Foundation SAELP Implementation Grant. The SAELP initiatives afforded Connecticut the unique opportunity to review its existing policies and programs and to build on existing programs to provide a comprehensive approach to strengthening school leadership to raise the achievement of all students.

Key accomplishments are as follows:

*Clarification of School Leader Roles and Responsibilities:* The Connecticut Association of Public School Superintendents (CAPSS) and the Connecticut Association of Boards of

Education (CABE) issued a joint statement of recommended roles and responsibilities of Boards of Education and Superintendents.

*Development of statewide School Leader Evaluation and Professional Development*

*Guidelines:* Implementation efforts included providing technical assistance to districts and convening a School Leader Evaluation and Professional Development Conference in October, 2003, in which the focus was on district best practices linking expectations of administrators to resources which address meeting the requirements of *No Child Left Behind* and student work as a focus for supervision and coaching. The CSDE also collaborated with the Hartford LEAD district in conducting Summer School Leadership Workshops focusing on use of Hartford's Administrator Leadership Evaluation and Professional Development Plan.

*Instructional Analysis and Coaching Resources to Districts:* CSDE, as part of the SAELP initiative, has produced a three CD set of video-based resources, entitled *Connecting Practice to Standards*, for school administrators, teacher leaders, mentors and preparation programs. The CDs have been distributed to all preparation programs, schools, central offices and mentors in Connecticut.

*Distributed Leadership Demonstration Site Activities:* New Haven and the Capitol Region Education Council (CREC) were awarded funds to implement Distributed Leadership demonstration sites with programs for principals and teacher leaders. In addition, CSDE has developed a Distributed Leadership Readiness Scale (DLRS), based in part on Richard Elmore's model of distributed leadership. The DLRS instrument has been used as part of the evaluation of the Distributed Leadership demonstration sites and as part of a study to develop leadership profiles of high-performing versus low-performing schools. The DLRS instrument is also being used as part of the evaluation of CSDE School Improvement Capacity Building for schools not meeting Annual Yearly Progress goals as part of NCLB.

*Survey of School Leader Induction Programs*

The Connecticut Association of Schools (CAS) was awarded a SAELP grant to summarize the research, practices and guidelines of induction programs, both in and out of Connecticut. CAS also conducted surveys of superintendents and principals and held focus groups seeking information and suggestions for induction.

*Alternate Routes for Administrator Preparation:* SAELP staff worked with the Hartford school system and Central Connecticut State University to offer a rigorous, alternate route to administrator preparation program that is cohort-based and held (in large part) in the Hartford school district. There are several unique features of this program, including a focus on making a stronger connection between core content and the specific learning needs of the Hartford system.

*Urban Leadership Academy*

The Connecticut Urban Leadership Academy—including the Bristol, East Hartford and Hartford school districts—was launched in the summer of 2003 to provide veteran urban school administrators with the ongoing professional development needed to address the achievement needs of students.

## **Overview of SAELP II**

The goal of SAELP II is to develop linkage between leader development and conditions of leadership at all levels of the state system to improve student achievement. SAELP II is organized around three “break-through ideas” as defined by the Wallace Foundation as ideas which challenge the status quo by proposing dramatic, substantive changes in key conditions affecting educational leadership in the state; address the conditions with appropriate strategies to improve educational leader development; are feasible, measurable and sustainable; and involve related strategies at the municipal, district, school and classroom levels. The three “break-through ideas” are illustrated in the following three schematics.

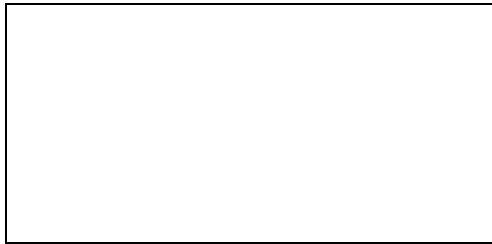
## Distributed Leadership

**The quality and sustainability of leadership must be addressed at multiple levels including licensing requirements, school leadership standards for preparation programs, district policies, instructional leadership at the school level and collaboration for performance-based instruction at the classroom.**

**Would be implemented by statewide strategies such as:**

### Leader Development

### Conditions of Success



*-Preparation Program Approval Aligned with Standards*  
*-New Teacher Leadership Credential*  
*-Adoption of State Board policy promoting distributed leadership*

**Would be reinforced by district/municipal strategies such as:**

### Leader Development

### Conditions of Success

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*-Provide training and support for school-based decision making*  
*-Develop leadership culture among teachers and administrators*



*-District School Leadership Evaluation /PD Policies*  
*-Succession planning policies, aspirants, and distributed leadership*  
*-Site-based management policies*

**Would be supported by school practices such as:**

### Leader Development

### Conditions of Success

*-School leaders participating in collaborative instructional decision-making*  
*-Schedules, time and resources are used to support collaboration in school improvement practices*



*-School culture & structures which value collaboration and shared practices*

**Could lead to classroom practices such as:**

*-School leaders use data, student work to inform supervision and coaching*  
*Teacher leaders share and compare effective practices*



*-Data and student work are central to informing practice*

**Which Will Result in:**

**Improved Student Achievement**

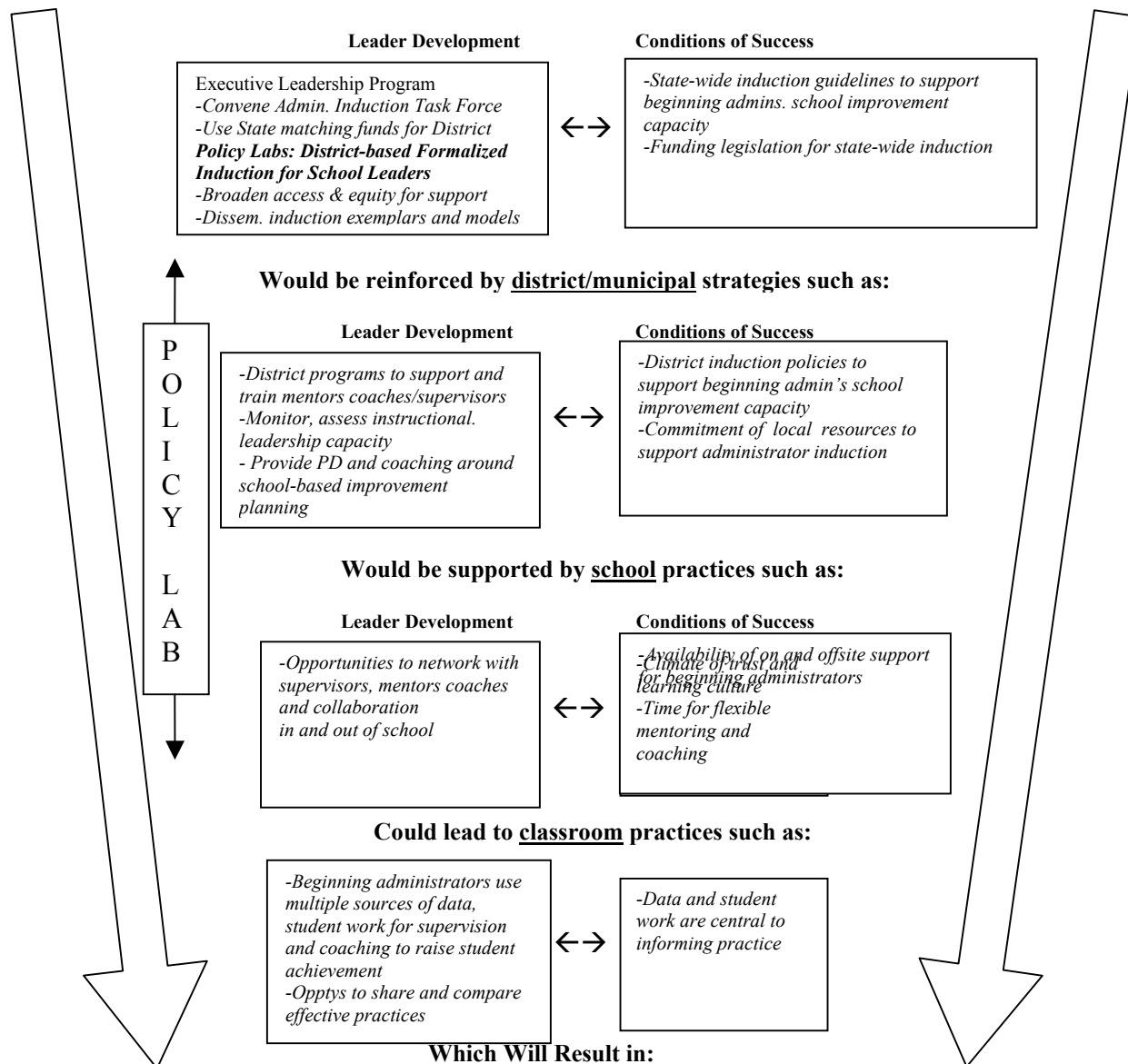
**Key:**

*Italics:* Proposed activities  
 Non-italics: Activities already underway

## Formalized Induction for School Improvement

**Universities, Districts and Providers will use Guidelines to reshape policies, resources and support processes focused on targeted school improvement for new administrators**

**Would be implemented by statewide strategies such as:**



### **Key:**

*Italics:* Proposed activities  
Non-italics: Activities already underway



## SAELP Breakthrough Idea Three

### Continuous Professional Development and Capacity Building for School Improvement

**SDE, LEAD/Urban and non-urban districts will network to implement professional development policies and access to resources targeted on strengthening school improvement capacity**

**Would be implemented by statewide strategies such as:**

#### **Leader Development**

- Convene Administrator/Teacher Leader Task Force
- Align preparation approval with leadership standards
- Hold statewide conference on LEAD/Urban best practices
- Develop Clearinghouse of Best Practices & PD resources
- Provide State grants to District Policy Labs: School Improvement –based Admin. Prof. Dev.

#### **Conditions of Success**

- CT School Leader Standards
- Certification and Preparation Program Approval aligned to leadership standards
- State-wide Guidelines for Evaluation/PD
- CEU requirements to support school improvement capacity
- Standards for using technology for school improvement



**Would be reinforced by district/municipal strategies such as:**

#### **Leader Development**

- LEAD participation in -urban district networks and consortia to deliver school improvement-based PD and dissem. of best practices

#### **Conditions of Success**

- District policies to support continuous professional development
- Allocation of resources for ongoing administrator school improvement planning
- Redefinition of leadership roles (admin. & teachers)



**Would be supported by school practices such as:**

#### **Leader Development**

- Training for school leaders to build skills in use of data, technology for shared decision making, focused on school improvement

#### **Conditions of Success**

- School structures & schedules that promote continuous improvement within the school
- Climate of leadership for learning
- New roles for admin. & teachers



**Could lead to classroom practices such as:**

- Admins use multiple sources of data, student work for supervision and coaching to raise student achievement
- Opptys to share and compare effective practices

- Data and student work are central to informing practice



**Which Will Result in:**

**Improved Student Achievement**

**Key:**

*Italics:* Proposed activities  
Non-italics: Activities already underway

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The following section explains each break-through idea in more detail, and defines the conditions of success as well as leader development strategies that need to be addressed at the state, district, school and classroom levels.

### **SAELP BREAK-THROUGH IDEA ONE: Distributed Leadership**

The quality and sustainability of leadership must be addressed at multiple levels including school leadership standards for preparation programs, district policies, instructional leadership at the school level and collaboration for performance-based instruction in the classroom.

The central concept of BTI #1 is that pathways to school leadership must be broadened to nurture future leaders, to harness the expertise of teacher leaders across classrooms, and to redefine administrator roles to strengthen teaching and learning for all students.

BTI #1 broadly addresses leadership roles and responsibilities systemically by proposing multiple strategies that bridge state, district, school and classroom practices. At the state level, preparation program approval standards, and related state policies will be examined and changes will be recommended within the context of district and school impact on policies and programs that broaden and improve school leadership pathways. A key tool for the transmission of through-line policy changes and feedback at the district level will be the **District-Based Policy Laboratories**.

District Policy Laboratories have been established for all three break-through ideas. Policy Labs are defined as demonstration sites for each of the three breakthrough ideas in which participating districts are working to change the conditions, skills and capacities of school leaders to implement school improvement processes. The purpose of the policy laboratories is to inform state policies, help districts develop the policies and practices that lead to increased student achievement as well as collect indicators of policy change at the district and school-level to evaluate progress over time, and eventually document and share these practices across the state. Hartford, Connecticut's LEAD district, will serve as one of the three participating districts for each of the three Policy Labs.

The Policy Lab for Break-through Idea One (Distributed Leadership Laboratory) will involve participating districts that have chosen to investigate their own policies and programs with regard to school leadership roles, responsibilities, distributed leadership practices, organizational structures and programs. Accordingly, these districts are more likely to make changes in district-based policies that will impact school time and resources for participation in shared decision making and data and student work-based supervision, coaching and collaboration. Participants in the district policy labs, in turn, will provide a feedback loop in the form of recommendations on state policy changes. A key role of the Leader-in-Residence will be to serve as the liaison between the state, district and school levels to maintain appropriate communications regarding the policy change process. The Policy Labs will also document and evaluate the results of changes of policies and programs at the local level and the results will be shared with all districts and other SAELP states.

The conditions of success along with the specific strategies for leadership development follow.

## **State-wide Conditions of Success**

### *Preparation program approval aligned to leadership standards*

As we consider the role of distributed leadership in schools we cannot ignore the importance of pre-service programs in the preparation of school leaders. Programs need to offer courses and practical experiences in light of the School Leadership Standards and research on distributed leadership practices which promote student achievement. See also BTI #3: Continuous Administrator Professional Development and Capacity Building for School Improvement.

### *New Teacher Leader Credential*

A Teacher Leadership credential will be proposed to broaden the pathways for teachers into formal teacher leader and administrator leadership positions.

### *State Board of Education Position Statement on the importance of shared leadership*

A position statement will be proposed to the Connecticut State Board of Education which discusses the importance of shared leadership and student achievement. The statement will include “best practices” as models from the Distributed Leadership Policy Laboratory.

## **State-wide Leader Development Strategies**

Multiple strategies will be used to help preparation programs develop programs to expand its pathways into school leadership (e.g., new model programs that would provide a range of opportunities for teachers to gain leadership training and experiences that may or may not lead to administrator certification). Based on the first year results of the Connecticut Administrator Test (CAT) required of all education leadership students, students encounter most difficulty passing the “school improvement” portions of the examination. The results of the CAT are provided to assist universities improve their programs; nonetheless, the data suggests that many teachers completing such programs have not had sufficient opportunities to learn about and practice school leadership for school improvement. SDE will assist programs in using strategies to focus teacher leadership coursework and experiences around school improvement processes (e.g., curriculum alignment, data use and interpretation, collaboration, change process).

- The state will work with the Department of Higher Education (DHE) to promote the creation of Masters/6<sup>th</sup> Year Teacher Leadership programs.
- Connecticut proposes to expand Hartford LEAD as a model of a cohort-based leadership preparation program by creating a statewide urban cohort-based leadership preparation consortium. Quality leadership in urban schools is critical to Connecticut’s efforts to close the achievement gap. Unfortunately, current administrator programs have not been designed to address the unique needs of aspiring urban leaders. While no single university has the necessary resources to develop such a program, a rigorous program for preparation will be developed by drawing on the faculty resources from a number of Connecticut universities as well as the experience and expertise of exemplary urban school leaders. Based on the expertise gained during SAELP I, a SAELP LEAD Urban District University Consortium is proposed to develop and implement such a program. Such cohort-based programs can have the effect of raising admission standards. Based on the strategies described in Break-through Idea 1,

university programs can also place additional emphasis on the selection of students who have demonstrated aspirant/teacher leadership experience.

- Connecticut will offer competitive grants to districts that wish to review, revise and implement policies which broaden leadership roles and redefine roles of administrators **(District Policy Laboratory: Distributed Leadership)**.
- The state will expand its Beginning Educator Support and Training Program (BEST) program to include portfolio scorer training by designing teacher leadership academies for each discipline area. Currently the state is developing academies for teachers in special education, mathematics and elementary education.
- SDE is investigating the role of the University of Connecticut New England Center for Policy Analysis in designing an instrument to measure policy change at the classroom, school, district and board level.
- To serve those teachers who subsequently decide to pursue administrator roles, the SDE/DHE will encourage universities to offer accelerated programs (based on teacher leadership coursework previously completed) leading to administrator certification.

### **District Conditions of Success**

*Local evaluation/professional development policies which promote teacher leadership and administrator aspirant opportunities*

Districts adapting the Connecticut's Guidelines for Teacher and School Leader Evaluation and Professional development expand opportunities for teachers to take formal and informal leadership responsibilities within school and at the district level and nurture the development of aspiring administrators.

*Succession planning*

At both the district and school level, there are considerable advantages to the early identification and development of aspiring school leaders including succession planning which helps to reduce the disruption associated with the hiring of new administrators and also serves as a strategy for the retaining of aspiring school leaders.

*Site-based management policies*

Districts that successfully implement and support collaborative school improvement policies can develop policies which help schools take on greater site-based decision making and accountability.

### **District Leadership Development Strategies**

- Superintendents should champion increased opportunities for schools to establish conditions that expand and redefine leadership roles and responsibilities based on student learning needs. Districts Policies will be analyzed and districts will have the opportunity to revise existing policies to promote the "growing" of future leaders and the reshaping of roles and responsibilities of existing school leaders.

- Districts will promote the development of new models of school-based authority and accountability to raise student achievement. Through the use of internal resources, SDE Best Practices, RESCs and the professional organizations, districts can formulate policies and practices that promote a “leadership culture.” A leadership culture that values leadership at all levels of education and promotes shared decision making, individual achievement, collaborative practices, and a willingness to take professional risks on behalf of student achievement. School leaders will be offered opportunities to build their understanding and practices of collaborative instructional decision making.
- Districts will develop programs involving the early identification and support of teacher leaders as future school and district level administrators.
- Successful urban districts differentiate among schools with regard to management based on each school's capacity and readiness. Districts should be able to recognize schools that are ready and have the capacity to engage in distributed leadership and use differentiated roles to raise student achievement. Policy analysis will be used to assist districts/schools to consider site-based management readiness.

### **School Conditions of Success**

*School Culture & Structures which value and promote collaboration and shared practices.*

Time and resources are critical to support collaboration in school improvement practices. The promotion of collaboration and shared practices are vital to building a learning and leadership culture.

### **School Leadership Development Strategies**

- School leaders will have ongoing opportunities to learn about and practice collaborative instructional decision-making.
- Efforts to identify future leaders and develop distributed leadership will not be successful or “take root” if school structures do not permit flexibility in the use of time during the school day. Supported by their districts, schools will investigate and use strategies that expand the innovative use of the school day (e.g., scheduling, common planning time, instructional team meetings, team teaching, co-teaching). Schools can use existing resources and district support to offer teachers stipends for expanded leadership responsibilities, training/professional development resources, substitute teachers, team teaching, etc.).

### **Classroom Conditions of Success**

*Data and student work are central to informing practice.*

### **Classroom Leadership Development Strategies**

- School leaders need opportunities to learn to understand and use data and student work to inform instructional practices.
- School administrators need opportunities to learn and use supervision and coaching practices which promote collaboration and continuous improvement.

- Teacher leaders need expanded opportunities to share and compare effective practices.
- With time and a wider variety of resources for training and experience available for school improvement activities, educators will share their expertise regarding assessment results, student work and other data related to student achievement with others and apply these skills within their classrooms.

## **SAELP BREAK-THROUGH IDEA TWO: Formalized Induction for School Improvement**

Universities, districts and providers will use School Leader Guidelines to reshape policies, resources and support for new administrators focused on targeted school improvement. The central focus of this Breakthrough Idea is the development of state-wide guidelines for district-based induction (in year one) that can be used by all Connecticut districts to support their beginning administrators. In years two and three, the key tool for developing and implementing local policies and programs will be the District-Based Policy Laboratory described in Breakthrough Idea #1.

In years two and three districts participating in the Induction Policy will be selected that have chosen to investigate their own policies and programs with regard to the support and training of beginning administrators. Accordingly, these districts are more likely to make changes in district-based policies that impact school time and resources for ongoing induction coaching and mentorship support. A unifying focus of the induction experience will be the development of a school improvement tasks or set of activities that serve to assist beginning administrators, their mentors and supervisors to assess professional development and capacity needs of new administrators for school improvement. This school improvement task will be developed and pilot tested with the expectation that it will be made widely available to school districts in Connecticut.

Participants in the Induction Policy Lab will provide recommendations on state policy changes necessary to implement a statewide support and training program for beginning administrators. A key role of the Leader-in-Residence will be to assist in writing the State Induction Guidelines and to again serve as the liaison between the state, district and school levels to maintain appropriate communications regarding the policy change process. The Policy Labs will also document and evaluate the results of changes in policies and programs at the local level and the results will be shared with all districts and other SAELP states.

The conditions of success along with the specific strategies for leadership development follow.

### **State-wide Conditions of Success**

*Statewide Administrator Induction Guidelines to support beginning administrators' school improvement capacity.*

It is critically important that Induction be systemically linked to the existing standards and state policies and meet the diverse needs of all Connecticut districts as well as address the specific needs and issues of urban districts.

*State Guidelines for Induction promote equity of access to support all new administrators.*  
Based on SDE's review of district evaluation and professional development plans, districts vary greatly in the resources and support provided for beginning administrators.

*Funding Legislation for State-wide Induction of Administrators.*

In order to sustain continuation and equity across districts, Connecticut will propose induction funding legislation.

### **Statewide Leader Development Strategies**

- SDE will convene an Administrator Induction Taskforce to develop statewide administrator induction guidelines. The Taskforce will also identify and incorporate into the Induction Guidelines, criteria of effective mentorship coaching selection, training and implementation.
- The state will offer a competitive **Induction Policy Laboratory** grant to critical partners (e.g., universities, RESCs, professional organizations) to develop different induction models (**District Policy Labs: Administrator Induction**).
- The Connecticut State Department of Education will work with districts, professional organizations, higher education and the RESCs to expand and disseminate induction and mentorship training offerings (e.g., opportunities to work with cohorts, mentors, and or coaches focused on building school improvement skills in and out of the school or district).
- SDE will also design a standardized school improvement activity for beginning administrators and their mentors to promote school improvement-based induction. The "School Improvement Activity" will be designed to help beginning administrators identify their professional development needs with respect to school improvement capacity. This activity will build upon existing improvement practices currently used by all schools.
- During the later stages of development, SDE will disseminate "Best/Promising Induction Practices" collected from participating districts. It is clear that no one induction model can meet the unique needs of all districts, schools and administrators. Some districts already have the internal capacity and resources to implement induction. Some induction programs are best delivered by higher education, RESCs, professional organizations and/or through regional collaborations. Regardless of the school context, induction should help build and reinforce skills and competencies needed to raise student achievement through the school improvement process.
- Connecticut will work with the education leadership preparation programs to develop stronger connections between education leadership programs and graduates serving as administrators. Education Leadership programs along with critical partners (e.g., professional organizations) will establish connections with their graduates to evaluate beginning administrator needs and program effectiveness. For example, participating in the mentorship and coaching of new administrators, preparation programs can better monitor, assess and adjust programs better prepare Connecticut's future administrators.

- Connecticut will work with the Executive Steering Committee to draft legislation to fund a state-wide induction program focused on enhancing new administrators' skills in school improvement planning and implementation.

### **District Conditions of Success**

*Districts will implement local policies to support beginning administrators' school improvement capacity.*

By redirecting resources, district, state and federal Title II funds, districts will review and revise policies regarding orientation/induction processes that address beginning administrator and school needs .

*Districts will commit local resources to support administrator induction.*

Districts need to examine the use of existing resources to support the development and support of beginning administrators.

### **District Leader Development Strategies**

- Districts will implement programs to support beginning administrators and train their mentors, coaches and supervisors. While there is much that new administrators must learn during the first two years of practice, including school management responsibilities, there must also be an emphasis placed on skills and capacities of instructional leadership to raise student achievement. Experienced administrators, for example, are often under-utilized as part of the mentoring and coaching of beginning administrators.
- Central office administrators will need to be actively involved in the ongoing monitoring, assessment and support of beginning administrators and will need to find efficient ways of offering assistance, support and opportunities to strengthen school improvement planning.

### **School Conditions of Success**

*Availability of on and off-site support for beginning administrators.*

It is not uncommon for beginning administrators to receive some form of district level support. In reality new administrators require a variety of resources and support from within and out of the school, particularly during their first two years of practice.

### **School Leader Development Strategies**

- In conjunction with central office support, beginning administrators should have ongoing opportunities to receive support (e.g., job coaching and collaboration). There should also be opportunities for administrators to contact and network with other administrators in like roles and positions, in and out of the school.
- Through the use of trained mentors, coaches, and supervisors, beginning administrators will be encouraged to communicate the successes and challenges within schools and across schools and to build trust in supervision and coaching processes to build school improvement capacity.



## **Classroom Conditions of Success**

*Data and student work are central to informing practices.*

## **School Leader Development Strategies**

- Beginning administrators will strengthen their skills in the use of multiple sources of data, student work for supervision and coaching to raise student achievement.
- Beginning schools leaders should also be offered multiple opportunities to share and compare effective practices with other administrators.

## **SAELP BREAK-THROUGH IDEA THREE: Ongoing Professional Development and Capacity Building for School Improvement**

State certification regulations should be aligned with leadership, teaching and student standards to continuously build the capacity of school administrators. SDE, LEAD/Urban and non-urban districts will network to implement professional development capacity building policies and access to resources targeted on strengthening school improvement capacity for experienced school leaders.

The central concept of Break-through Idea Three is that state district and school policies must be aligned to provide the conditions that facilitate continuous school-improvement based professional development. At the state level, policies such as Certification, Preparation Program Approval Requirements and CEU requirements, sources of best practices, and other resources can be used, in part, to assist districts and schools to develop and implement policies and programs that embed continuous improvement in the learning culture of schools and classrooms. Each of these state policies impacts the continua of professional practices from pre-service through accomplished levels of expertise.

In the Continuous Professional Development and Capacity Building Policy Lab participating districts will be selected that have chosen to investigate their own policies and programs with regard to the support and training of veteran administrators. Accordingly, these districts are more likely to make changes in district-based policies that impact school time and resources for ongoing professional development of school administrators

Participants in this district policy lab will provide recommendations on state policy changes to promote the ongoing support and training of administrators in the school improvement process. In addition, Hartford LEAD, serving as one of the districts participating in the policy lab will build on its lessons learned through experiences with the urban leadership academy coaching model.

A key role of the Leader-in-Residence will be to serve as the liaison between the state, district and school levels to maintain communications about the policy change process. The Policy Labs will also document and evaluate the results of changes of policies and programs at the local level and the results will be shared with all districts and other SAELP states.

The conditions of success along with the specific strategies for leadership development follow.

## **Statewide Conditions of Success**

*State certification requirements aligned to leadership standards.*

Some certification requirements reinforce distinctly different roles for teachers and administrators, which may present barriers to aspirants to leadership positions. Certification requirement should be aligned to state standards, which represent and promote the necessary knowledge skills and abilities needed by school leaders to engage in ongoing school improvement.

*Preparation program approval aligned to leadership standards.*

As addressed in BTI # 1: Distributed Leadership, preparation programs need to offer courses and practical experiences in light of the School Leadership Standards and research on practices which promote student achievement. There should be a clear alignment between administrator preparation program and certification requirements. Certification requirements should reinforce and drive the core technical knowledge and skills needed for successful school leaders.

*State CEU requirements that support school improvement capacity.*

Connecticut uses a three-tiered licensure process including an initial, provisional and professional certificate. Since CEUs currently serve as the chief requirement for the provisional and professional certificates it must be carefully aligned with Connecticut's student, teacher and leader standards.

*Integration of technology into School Leadership Standards for school improvement.*

School leaders have been involved in a growing number of technology-based initiatives for the last few years. It is critically important to not only understand the role that technology can play to improve management functions but it must also be adapted in ways which strengthen planning, teaching and assessing, and evaluating.

## **Statewide Leader Development Strategies**

- Connecticut will convene the Administrator/Teacher Leader State Certification task force to examine and propose changes to the existing certification laws and regulations by convening an Administrator/Teacher Taskforce. In addition, the Taskforce will review and propose revisions to the existing Preparation Program Approval Requirements based on the Connecticut School Leadership Standards.
- The five-year administrator preparation program approval requirements will be reviewed and revised to expand on teacher leadership competencies. Education leadership programs should work within and across universities to provide incentives for teacher leaders to enroll in administrator programs by offering credits for appropriate coursework taken as a teacher.
- Develop LEAD Urban District Networks to share “lessons learned & best practices.” The Guidelines for School Leader Evaluation and Professional Development introduced during SAELP I will be augmented with expanded examples and models of effective school improvement-based professional development plans. SDE will also partner with Hartford LEAD to conduct an annual conference that showcases districts’ “lessons learned and successful practices.”

- Connecticut will convene a Taskforce to review its existing CEU requirements and establish guidelines for administrator school improvement-based professional development for administrators.
- Connecticut will participate with the CCSO to adapt ISLLC standards that encompass technology. Connecticut is proposing to work with a policy analysis technical consultant to assist policy laboratories in reviewing and analyzing existing and changed indicators or policy change.
- Districts and their administrators are often unaware of or encounter difficulty finding professional development offerings conducted throughout the state. Connecticut will establish a web-based “clearing house” of existing resources, schedules, events, seminars and workshops to support administrator professional development. To assist administrators to plan their own professional development, SDE will work with districts, professional organizations, RESCs and higher education to identify and develop appraisal systems to identify professional development needs (e.g., self appraisal, professional skill inventories).
- Connecticut will provide a competitive grant to fund a **District Policy Lab for Continuous School Administrator Professional Development**

### **District Conditions of Success**

*Policies to support continuous school improvement.*

Districts will establish policies based on the State Evaluation/Professional Development Guidelines, which establish ongoing professional development for administrators, related to school improvement goals.

*Allocation of resources for ongoing administrator school improvement planning.*

In SAELP I, an urban leadership academy was piloted which offered a promising approach to meeting administrator professional development needs. This approach included the use of a team of trained, volunteer coaches who met with principals on a regular basis to address specific school improvement. However, such programs are unlikely to succeed if there is not a strong commitment from the local board of education and the superintendent to provide ongoing resources and support for administrator growth.

### **District Leader Development Strategies**

- As CEU providers, districts can help focus schools on professional development opportunities most central in raising student achievement. CEU Guidelines will assist districts in identifying professional development opportunities more directly aligned with promoting the success of all students.
- Hartford LEAD has, over the last two years, institutionalized the Connecticut School Leadership standards as part of their Teacher Evaluation and School Leader Evaluation process, which, in turn, is aligned with their School Improvement-based Professional Development. SAELP II proposes to build on Hartford’s progress for Break through Idea 3 (SIP-based professional development) in two critical ways (see Figure 1). First, Connecticut will establish Hartford as one of the Policy Labs for each of the three breakthrough ideas.

- Second, LEAD will work with the three Policy Labs to apply lessons learned in policy impact at the board, district and school levels. Third, Hartford will work with CSDE to further disseminate its lessons learned through an annual Northeastern SAELP Conference that will bring together urban districts in Connecticut, Massachusetts and Rhode Island, to showcase and examine urban schools that have been transformed from low to high student achievement. The primary purpose of such a conference will be to help districts better understand the variety of strategies that may be used to transform schools.
- Districts currently engaging in school reform need expanded opportunities to learn about the resources and strategies needed to improve and sustain student achievement. The conference will be designed to share lessons learned and to promote such successes and share strategies with local boards, central offices and schools.
- The District Policy Labs will be used to systemically examine and change district policies, as well as produce policy development models that can be shared with other districts.
- Districts will identify and develop ongoing opportunities for school administrators to build their knowledge and skills in school improvement planning.

### **School Conditions of Success**

*School culture & structures, which value and promote collaboration and shared practices.*

Time and resources are critical to support collaboration in school improvement practices. The promotion of collaboration and shared practices are vital to building a learning and leadership.

*New roles for administrators and teachers.*

Schools that engage in distributed leadership practices build leadership teams who may share some management functions as well as instructional leadership responsibilities. Creation of leadership teams often means shifting how we utilize principals, assistant principals, teachers, and support staff. For example, the assistant principal's role might be redefined to include sharing more instructional leadership responsibilities with the principal. Teacher roles might expand to include formal roles as mentors, coaches, and school improvement team leaders.

### **School Leader Development Strategies**

- School structures and schedules should be re-aligned to accommodate professional development activities, which is sustained and ongoing.
- School leaders will build skills in use of technology, data, student work for shared decision making focused on school improvement. As discussed in Break-through Idea 1, administrators not only need to be effective managers but they need to understand the nature of the change process and how to work collaboratively to build a school learning culture. For example, Connecticut has learned that schools that have expanded shared decision making, clearly aligned mission vision and goals, and targeted important student learning needs are schools that produce high student achievement.
- Collaborative instructional leadership often requires fundamental changes in leadership roles including supervision, evaluation, coaching and staffing practices.

### **Classroom Conditions of Success**

*Data and student work are central to informing practice.*

### **Classroom Leader Development Strategies**

- School leaders need expanded opportunities to use multiple sources of data, student work to focus supervision, mentoring and coaching practices.
- School leaders need regular opportunities to share and compare effective practices.